

know, more endangered species depend upon the habitat provided by wetlands than any other environment for survival. In coastal areas, each mile of vegetated wetland also reduces storm surge by one foot—protecting these areas will save FEMA money in future natural disasters.

This bill recognizes the wetland destruction caused by nutria in Louisiana and authorizes the Department of Interior to become a partner in our state's ongoing efforts to prevent further damage to inland and coastal wetland areas as a result of nutria.

Mr. GILCHREST. Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

□ 1245

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. BIGGERT). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. GILCHREST) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 273.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds of those present have voted in the affirmative.

Mr. GILCHREST. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

REQUIRING SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE TO PAY COSTS OF ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEWS WITH RESPECT TO CONVEYANCES UNDER EDUCATION LAND GRANT ACT

Mr. HAYWORTH. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 108) to amend the Education Land Grant Act to require the Secretary of Agriculture to pay the costs of environmental reviews with respect to conveyances under that Act.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 108

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. COSTS OF REVIEWS FOR CONVEYANCES UNDER EDUCATION LAND GRANT ACT.

Section 202 of the Education Land Grant Act (16 U.S.C. 479a) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(f) COSTS OF REVIEW.—The Secretary shall pay the costs of all action required under section 102(2)(C) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4332(2)(C)) with respect to any conveyance under this section.”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. HAYWORTH) and the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands (Mrs. CHRISTENSEN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. HAYWORTH).

Mr. HAYWORTH. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, H.R. 108, which amends the Education Land Grant Act to require the Secretary of Agriculture to pay the costs of environmental reviews, is an important piece of legislation for many schools, many school districts, but most of all for many students across the United States of America.

Currently the new Education Land Grant Act enacted in the 106th Congress allows the Forest Service to convey up to 80 acres of its land to school districts to renovate, expand, or construct school facilities. The act requires that land conveyed is identified for disposal in the particular forest's plan and that the conveyance cost of the survey is borne by the applicant. The Forest Service has determined this cost to be \$10 per acre.

However, both conveyance of land under this act and the forest plan amendment require an environmental analysis under the National Environmental Policy Act known as NEPA. Presently the Education Land Grant Act and the interim Forest Service manual fail to indicate who bears the cost of the environmental analysis.

Madam Speaker, this is the crucial point today. In implementing this law, the Forest Service staff has administratively determined that schools that apply for a conveyance under this act would need to pay for various administrative costs, analyses, and environmental compliance assessment. In fact, Madam Speaker, the interim directive that has now finally been distributed states various costs to be borne by school districts, and, I quote now, “Nominal costs includes the nominal fee of \$10 per acre conveyed, plus all costs directly associated with the project that the Forest Service may incur to evaluate and process a school district's request to acquire National Forest Service lands under ELGA, such as, costs associated with National Environmental Policy Act compliance, document preparation, surveys, posting of property monuments, markers, or posts, and recordation.”

In fact, another memo mentioned that even staff time, that even staff time used to process requests will need to be paid by school districts.

Madam Speaker, my colleagues, what we have here is a disconnection. In the 106th Congress this body passed the new Education Land Grant Act unanimously. The other body did likewise. It was signed into law by President Clinton in his final days of office. Here we have a textbook example of elected officials, constitutional officers, doing their job. As the author of the new Education Land Grant Act, it was never my intent for a governmental bureaucracy to determine administratively that they were going to charge the rural school districts of America for their staff time. Indeed, Madam Speaker, if I am not mistaken, anyone in the employment of the United States Government serves the people, and here we have an administrative di-

rective saying we are going to charge school district X staff time for Federal workers to work on this. This is a disconnection between the intent of Congress, the assent of the executive branch, and the execution by a bureaucracy.

Madam Speaker, the costs associated with the conveyance under ELGA are truly minimal to the Forest Service, a drop in the bucket for that agency. Here is the problem: Those same costs can prove absolutely prohibitive to school districts seeking to expand their facility. Indeed, Madam Speaker, the intent of the legislation was to offer this land at minimal costs to school districts, and our studies have borne out that in 44 of our 50 States this will have a positive impact primarily for rural districts, but the entire intent of the legislation was to allow those rural districts to focus their financial resources where they are best used, helping teachers teach and helping children learn, not to be caught up in a bureaucratic morass that would prove to be prohibitive to those districts.

So this particular piece of legislation, Madam Speaker, H.R. 108, will require the Forest Service to accept the full cost of the environmental analysis required by NEPA for these small land conveyances. This would free local school districts from burdensome administrative costs, allow them to spend funds again on what is most important, what goes on in the classroom for their students.

The Education Land Grant Act was initially passed by this Congress for the purpose of aiding local school districts. This legislation will simply direct the Forest Service to pay for any environmental analysis costs, allowing the Act to achieve its original intent of improving communities and benefiting school children across the United States.

Madam Speaker, I would ask my colleagues to join me in support of this legislation.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

(Mrs. CHRISTENSEN asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Madam Speaker, H.R. 108 would require the Secretary of Agriculture to pay the costs of environmental reviews conducted pursuant to the Educational Land Grant Act. The majority and my colleague have already clearly and very passionately explained the bill, and we have no objection. So we support H.R. 108.

Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. HAYWORTH. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands (Mrs. CHRISTENSEN) for her favorable comments.

Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. HAYWORTH) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 108.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds of those present have voted in the affirmative.

Mr. HAYWORTH. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

McLOUGHLIN HOUSE NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE ACT

Mr. GILCHREST. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 733) to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to acquire the McLoughlin House National Historic Site in Oregon City, Oregon, and to administer the site as a unit of the National Park System, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 733

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; DEFINITIONS.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the "McLoughlin House National Historic Site Act".

(b) DEFINITIONS.—For the purposes of this Act, the following definitions apply:

(1) ASSOCIATION.—The term "Association" means the McLoughlin Memorial Association, an organization described in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 and exempt from taxation under section 501(a) of such Code.

(2) CITY.—The term "City" means Oregon City, Oregon.

(3) HISTORIC SITE.—The term "Historic Site" means the McLoughlin House National Historic Site which is described in the Acting Assistant Secretary of the Interior's Order of June 27, 1941, and generally depicted on the map entitled "McLoughlin House National Historic Site", numbered 007/80,000, and dated 12/01/01, and includes the McLoughlin House, the Barclay House, and other associated real property, improvements, and personal property.

(4) SECRETARY.—The term "Secretary" means the Secretary of the Interior.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds the following:

(1) On June 27, 1941, Acting Assistant Secretary of the Interior W.C. Mendenhall, by means of the authority granted the Secretary under section 2 of the Historic Sites Act of August 21, 1935, established the McLoughlin Home National Historic Site, located in the City.

(2) Since January 16, 1945, the site has been known as McLoughlin House National Historic Site.

(3) The Historic Site includes the McLoughlin House and Barclay House, which are owned and managed by the Association.

(4) The Historic Site is located in a Charter Park on Oregon City Block 40, which is owned by the City.

(5) A cooperative agreement was made in 1941 among the Association, the City, and

the United States, providing for the preservation and use of the McLoughlin House as a national historic site.

(6) The Association has had an exemplary and longstanding role in the stewardship of the Historic Site but is unable to continue that role.

(7) The Historic Site has been an affiliated area of the National Park System and is worthy of recognition as part of the National Park System.

SEC. 3. McLOUGHLIN HOUSE NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE.

(a) ACQUISITION.—The Secretary is authorized to acquire the Historic Site, from willing sellers only, by donation, purchase with donated or appropriated funds, or exchange, except that lands or interests in lands owned by the City may be acquired by donation only.

(b) BOUNDARIES; ADMINISTRATION.—Upon acquisition of the Historic Site, the acquired property shall be included within the boundaries of, and be administered as part of, the Fort Vancouver National Historic Site in accordance with all applicable laws and regulations of the National Park System.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. GILCHREST) and the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands (Mrs. CHRISTENSEN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. GILCHREST).

Mr. GILCHREST. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, H.R. 733, introduced by the gentlewoman from Oregon (Ms. HOOLEY) authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to acquire the McLoughlin House National Historic Site in Oregon City, Oregon, and to administer it as part of the existing Fort Vancouver National Historic Site, which has already been established as a unit of the National Park System.

I would like to say after reading some of the information before us here this morning that I want to thank the gentlewoman from Oregon (Ms. HOOLEY) for bringing this to the floor's attention and that the "father of Oregon," as it is stated here, Dr. John McLoughlin from the Hudson Bay Company, provided many weary travelers with the goods and the resources and the comfort that they needed as they traversed this great continent.

H.R. 733, introduced by Congresswoman DARLENE HOOLEY, authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to acquire the McLoughlin House National Historic Site in Oregon City, Oregon, and to administer it as part of the existing Fort Vancouver National Historic Site, which has already been established as a Unit of the National Park System. The McLoughlin House, an Affiliated Area of the National Park System, has long been the beneficiary of a close working relationship between the managing entity, the McLoughlin Memorial Association, and its partner, the National Park Service. The McLoughlin Memorial Association is no longer in a position to be able to support and manage the National Historic Site. Consequently, this bill will enable the National Park Service to essentially exchange roles with the association to preserve this important historical treasure, while continuing to use the association as a resource. At the same time, the bill does not

create a new park unit, but rather allows the House to be administered as part of an existing unit.

The McLoughlin House National Historic Site is named for Dr. John McLoughlin, the "Father of Oregon" who established the famous British Hudson Bay Company in Vancouver, Washington in 1825. Dr. McLoughlin supplied American pioneers with the goods they needed to settle and survive at their new home in Oregon.

The House passed the same language in this bill during the 107th Congress as part of a larger package. The bill still enjoys the same broad support that it did last Congress and I urge my colleagues to support it.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

(Mrs. CHRISTENSEN asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Madam Speaker, the McLoughlin House National Historic Site in Oregon honors the achievements of John McLoughlin, commonly referred to as the "Father of Oregon." The site has been preserved and managed by the McLoughlin Memorial Association since its designation as a national historic site in 1941. Unfortunately, the association is no longer in a position to be the primary management entity for this nationally very significant site and is therefore seeking Federal acquisition of the site. Once acquired, the site will be managed as part of the nearby Fort Vancouver National Historic Site.

The gentlewoman from Oregon (Ms. HOOLEY) has worked tirelessly on behalf of this legislation and is to be commended for her diligence and perseverance. The McLoughlin House site might have well begun to suffer serious deterioration had she not stepped in to preserve this important historic resource.

Madam Speaker, I yield such time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from Oregon (Ms. HOOLEY).

Ms. HOOLEY of Oregon. Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague for yielding me this time.

I thank my colleague from Maryland for his kind words.

I rise today in appreciation of my colleagues who made bringing this bill to the floor possible.

Standing 6 foot 4 inches tall, Dr. John McLoughlin cast a giant of a shadow on the early development of the Oregon frontier. For 21 years his powerful voice was the only influence of law and order over an empire 2½ times the size of Texas. He had absolute control, and he maintained it peacefully and profitably with a balance of justice. With an overwhelming sense of compassion and generosity beyond reproach, it is little wonder that he was regarded by native Americans as a "Great White Eagle." John McLoughlin did indeed walk tall and cast the greatest shadow that ever fell so humbly on the changing face of Oregon.